CSI Coordinator with Metro Parks

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BACKGROUND

- **Mission statement**: to conserve open spaces, while providing places and opportunities that encourage people to discover and experience nature.
- **Role**: CSI Coordinator – supervising and working alongside a cohort of 15 Columbus City School high school interns.
- **Getting the job**: I found and applied for the position directly through the organizations website.

REMINDER

- **Duration**: the CSI program is 8 weeks long, but the coordinators worked for 3 months with additional training both before and after the program.
- **Where**: we visited and/or worked in 10 Metro Parks around Franklin County.
- **Schedule**: we spent a full week at 8 different metro parks.
- **Tasks**: carried out jobs specific to each park’s needs: pruning, staining, tree planting, invasive removal, construction of natural play areas, litter removal, and more
- **Transportation duties**: about 10 hours/week were spent transporting the students to and from their homebase high schools and the parks

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Removal of the invasive Callery Pear tree from Highbanks Metro Park (left) and the planting of a native tree by Quarry Trail Assistant Park Manger, Ethan (right).**
- **Students were given the chance interact with farm animals at Slate Run Metro Park and partake in outdoors recreation activities such as archery and kayaking**
- **A natural play area we constructed at Highbanks Metro Park**
- **A bison located at Batelle Darby Metro Park and a rat snake from Blendon Woods’ Nature Center**

ON THE JOB

- **Enjoying nature**: the educational activities were paired with excursions such as kayaking, archery, golf, rock climbing, and visiting Slate Run Farm.

REFLECTIONS

- **This job encouraged me to be more comfortable being uncomfortable, improved my leadership abilities, and heightened my adaptability skills.**
- **It provided me with an array of new technical skills and knowledge such as identification of plant species and the operation of 2 cycle equipment.**
- **After graduation, I intend on leaving my options open while gaining experience in different environmental fields.**
- **I view parks and recreational as a potential career route. However, the internship also opened my eyes to related paths such as landscape architecture.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The perfect candidate for this job would be an individual who enjoys working outside and finds fulfillment in engaging with young adults.**
- **Leadership skills and the ability to collaborate with others are very helpful attributes in order to be successful in this job. You are not only responsible for 15 high school students, but you also interact with countless different park staff members.**
- **I would caution that you should be okay with long days, uncomfortable weather conditions, and physical labor.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My summer with Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks was incredibly fulfilling, and I believe it will serve great value for my future career. I was able to meet dozens of helpful, engaging staff members during my internship. Moreover, we were led by encouraging, honest, and patient supervisors who fostered an environment to promote our own personal development. I want to thank JJ Domiano and Russell Cowden for their support throughout the summer and for giving me this opportunity.